Provisions have also been made for the development of commercially exploitable natural gas resources.

The medium-sized fields would be developed through joint ventures between Oil & Natural Gas Corporation Ltd. (ONGCL)/Oil India Limited (OIL) on the one hand and the private companies on the. other. ONGC/OIL would take a 40% share in the venture. The small-sized fields would be developed by companies on their own, with no participation by ONGC/OIL, under production sharing contracts to be signed by the companies with the Government of India. In both cases, companies would also be required to bear their share of statutory levies like royalty, cess, etc. Foreign companies involved in oil exploration would be levied income-tax at a fixed rate of 50% while Indian companies would be governed by the relevant provisions of the Income-Tax. In addition private companies would share profit oil with the Government.

(d) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

Seismological observatories to forecast earthquakes in Maharashtra

1362. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Govt, have established seismological observatories in various parts of Maharashtra to forecast earthquakes in the state;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) whether Govt. have planned to establish more such observatories in the State; and

(d) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH): (a) and (b) There is no scientific technique available to forecast earthquakes with a reasonable degree of accuracy. However, the Government have established a number of seismological observatories in Maharashtra to monitor seismic activity. India Meteorological Department is maintaining six of them at Pune, Latur, Karad, Akola, Nagpur and Bombay. Other Governmental agencies like Maharashtra Engineering Research Institute and National Geophysical Research Institute are also operating a number of observatories in Maharashtra.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. Two clusters of observatories are planned to be established in Koyna and Latur regions in the near future.

Direct Foreign Investment in the Hydrocarbon Sector

1363. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has called for a stable liberal policy for next 12 to 15 years to encourage direct foreign investment in the hydrocarbon sector;

(b) whether any regulatory body to oversee conjunction has been formed;

(c) if so, what would be the main purpose of this regulatory body;

(d) whether the Ministry has also proposed total reform package and the time schedule for introduction of different stages of reforms to be announced so that investors are aware of the expected returns; and

(e) if so, whether any concrete action programme in this regard is being worked out?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) The Government's policy to encourage private investment in the petroleum sector in the last few years has resulted in award of 20 exploration blocks and 30 medium and small size fields for exploitation to the private sector. Many

private oil refineries are being set up and certain petroleum products can now be imported by the private sector to augment the supplies being made by the National companies.

(b) Besides National companies a number of private and joint sector oil companies started operating in the country due to privatisation drive undertaken by the Government. Thus, it became necessary to' have a regulatory body to monitor the role of all these companies. Accordingly Directorate General, Hydrocarbons was created by the Government in April, 1993.

(c) Besides advising the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas on up-stream petroleum sector the main objective of Directorate General Hydrocarbons (DGH) is to promote sound management of the Indian Petroleum and Natural Gas resources with a balanced regard for Environment, Safety, Technological and Economic aspects of the petroleum activity.

(d) and (e) R—Group constituted to suggest reforms in hydrocarbon sector has submitted its report. This is under consideration of Government.

Sea-food processing units in Orissa

1364. SHRIMATI ILA PANDA: Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) the names of sea-food processing units in Orissa;

(b) whether it is a fact that a number of proposals are pending with the Ministry for setting up of sea-food processing units in the State; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI DILIP KUMAR RAY): (a) to (c) Sea-food processing Industries are delicensed and exist both in the unorganised and organised sectors. Therefore, the 'names of such units are not maintained centrally.

Rural electrification by the end of 8th Five Year Plan

1365. SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the target set for Rural Electrification by the end of 8th Five Year Plan and the progress as on date:

(b) by when the villages in the country would be electrified; and

(c) the details of total investment planned for 8th Five Year Plan and actually made so far in Rural electrification by Rural Electrification Corporation and other organisations dealing with providing electricity to villages?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI): (a) The 8th Plan document had a programme for electrification of 50,000 villages (including 10,000 villages through Non-Conventional Energy Resources) and energisation of 25 lakhs pumpsets during the 8th Plan period. Rural Electrification is a continuous process and the targets for electrification are fixed on a year to year basis. During the first 4 years of the 8th Plan (1992-93 to 1995-96), against the target of electrification of 14,672 villages and energisation of 11,47,328 pumpsets, 14,661 villages have been electrified and 17,12,982 pumpsets have been energised.

(b) The remaining unelectrified villages will be electrified in the 9th and subsequent 5 year Plans, subject to the availability of funds and other inputs.

(c) Planning Commission approved an outlay of Rs. 4,000 crores for rural electrification programme during the 8th Plan period. Yearwise outlays approved by the Planning Commission under REC programmes and State Plans as also the actual investments made for the first four